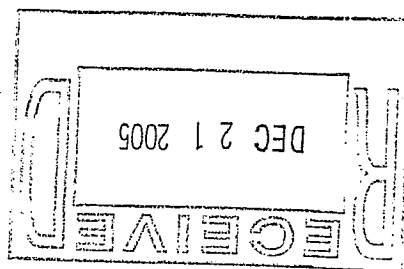
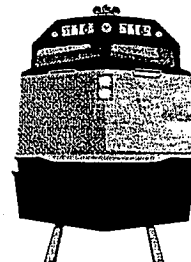


# TRAC

Train Riders  
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December 16, 2005

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## Executive Director

Alan C. Miller

Mr. Doug Kimsey  
Project Manager, Bay Regional Rail Study  
Metropolitan Transportation Commission  
101 8<sup>th</sup> Street  
Oakland Ca 94107

Subject: Regional Rail Study

Dear Mr. Kimsey:

Fifty years ago cars were carried across the Bay on boats, freeways were rare and trains ran on the Bay Bridge. Since that time the automobile has gradually taken over and it's now time to change course. The Regional Rail Study looks ahead fifty years. It therefore represents a unique opportunity to set things straight. TRAC regards the Bay Regional Rail Study as a means through which the Bay Region's transportation system can be brought gradually back into balance.

The Train Riders Association of California (TRAC) welcomes the opportunity to participate in the Study. Since many of our members live and work in areas that will be affected by its results, TRAC has a strong interest in helping ensure that these results are both practical and worthwhile. Attached is a TRAC Position Paper with suggestions relating to General Criteria, Project-specific Selection Criteria, Proposed Study Elements and General Principles:

Thanks for your stewardship of this landmark study. You may count upon TRAC's continuing interest and participation in the Study, which we regard as vital to the future well being of the Greater Bay Area.

If you have questions or wish to discuss any of the above proposals please contact Michael Kiesling, the Chair of TRAC's Bay Region Task Force, or Gerald Cauthen, TRAC's President.

Sincerely yours,

*Alan C. Miller*  
Alan C. Miller,  
Executive Director

cc Dan Leavitt  
Gary Patton  
Tom Matoff

## **Bay Regional Rail Study Initial Suggestions and Recommendations**

### **General Criteria**

- The selected alternative should serve the overall objective of minimizing the necessity for....and length of....automobile trips
- It should result in a reduction of total Bay Region VMT below today's level by at least 1/4% a year for at least the 50-year study period
- It should avoid allocating scarce transportation dollars to wasteful or inappropriate projects promoted by special or parochial interests

### **Project-Specific Selection Criteria**

- Projects should meet or exceed FTA's New Starts Cost-effectiveness and other Standards
- They should serve transit-oriented development either through infill in urban centers or brownfield development
- They should make maximum and optimal use of existing rail right-of-way, where it is able to support reliable, higher-speed passenger service.
- They should include acquisition of new rail ROW where required to support reliable 125 + mph commuter rail service and/or high speed rail service
- In any event they should be conducive to regular and reliable long term passenger rail service
- They should conform to a pulsed system, such that transfers between trains, key bus lines and ferries involve minimal wait time, or no wait time where the headways are the same
- They should avoid locating stations inaccessibly or unattractively in the middle of freeways

### **Proposed Study Elements**

- Eliminate the ill-conceived BART-to-San Jose extension from consideration. If that is not possible, include at least three Study alternatives that feature replacement of the BART extension with a commuter rail service operating on existing ROW

- In all alternatives, include both the Transbay Terminal project and a suitable BART/Railroad intermodal station in the Union City/Fremont area, both of which are vital to the building of an effective transit network in the Bay Area
- With respect to the Transbay Terminal, determine patronage both with and without the underground ped-ramp connection between the mezzanine levels of the Transbay Terminal and either Embarcadero or Montgomery Station
- Include a speeded-up and more frequent Capitol Corridor Service, with additional trackage as required to eliminate interference between passenger trains and freight trains
- Include an electrified Caltrain Service, extended into the Transbay Terminal
- Include extending ACE service into San Francisco
- Include an efficient BART/Mainline transfer station in downtown or West Oakland
- Consider the effect of depressing or elevating the section of passenger and freight rail line that passes through downtown Oakland
- Consider the financial and other benefits of raising bridge tolls to \$5 for the purpose of supporting transit services
- Provide an "early action" list of high priority projects deserving of immediate State funding

### **General Principles**

- 1) Specific steps should be taken to make certain that rail development does not encourage more sprawl. For this reason the new and expanded rail lines should serve transit-oriented housing and other development created by infill within urban centers and "brownfield development" (redevelopment of outmoded retail, commercial, warehouse and factory districts). Potential for brownfield development along rail lines and the creation of new activity nodes that constitute environmentally responsible development should be weighed against the pros and cons of increasing densities in historic town centers. Special consideration should be given to municipalities committed to clustering their new development around rail stations.
- 2) With respect to high-speed Bay Area access, it is essential that the selected alignment be the one most beneficial to the most people, based upon an impeccably fair and objective assessment of the situation
- 3) If a northerly high-speed Bay Area access alignment is chosen it should incorporate a 125 + mph commuter rail service
- 4) For cost estimating purposes it is essential that the high-speed rail track sections be defined carefully. For the Southern Alignment the section should extend from Chowchilla, the San Joaquin Valley junction point, to Redwood City. For the Northern Alignment the section should extend from Manteca, its San Joaquin junction point, to Redwood City and from Fremont to San Jose. The cost of the Chowchilla to Manteca section should be excluded from the cost of the Northern Alignment because the Chowchilla to Manteca section will have to be constructed in any event to serve Sacramento.

- 5) Given the excessive traffic congestion that already plagues Bay Region urban centers, there should be no more expansion of Bay Region freeways and expressways
- 6) A single regional fare structure should apply to all transit services. Multi-ride fares should be discounted
- 7) For modeling purposes, free shuttle services between major transit nodes and major employers should be assumed
- 8) For modeling purposes, free employee parking should be replaced with free employee transit passes
- 9) For modeling purposes, the effect of regional express bus lines, ferry routes and local train and bus lines must be taken fully into account. This would include regional buses in the Transbay Corridor (unless a second transbay tube is assumed) and in the I-680 corridor, among others. Connecting important centers with regional, other express and local buses in a carefully coordinated manner is logical and should not be excluded from the modeling analysis.
- 10) To achieve valid modeling results, rail system capacities must be accurately defined. If, as is widely believed, BART's capacity in MTC's current model is "unconstrained", this flaw must be corrected.
- 11) Ferry service between railheads should also be modeled as part of the rail network. This proposal applies particularly to SMART's railhead in Larkspur.
- 12) Alternatives should be evaluated based upon life-cycle costs, not just capital costs.
- 13) During the 50-year Study period, all passenger rail equipment in use today will be replaced once or twice. Therefore, the study must consider and model both vehicles that comply with today's FRA standards and those that don't, such as the state-of-the-art vehicles in current use all over Europe.
- 14) Excepting for units operating on freight railway lines, passenger trains should be level-boarding. Except for BART they should conform to standard dimensional and loading criteria, thus allowing the widest number of worldwide suppliers to bid for equipment orders.
- 15) Multiple rail modes within a single corridor, such as the Fremont-to-San Jose Corridor, must be modeled in a manner designed to show the effect of each existing and contemplated service on each other service. Duplicative services should be avoided whenever possible.
- 16) A intense and comprehensive negotiation, participated in by transit properties, governmental officials, rail vehicle suppliers, environmentalists, passenger rail advocates, freight operators and others, will be required to bring about the adjustment of current mainline dispatching practices needed to permit both freight trains and passenger trains to operate reliably and efficiently on common tracks or in common ROW.
- 17) Despite dispatching improvements, there will be instances where it will be necessary to consider acquiring portions of privately owned freight rail ROW for exclusive passenger rail use. In such cases, it will be essential to balance the capital costs of these acquisitions against the interference and other problems associated with joint freight rail/passenger rail operations.

- 18) The rail development and expansion contemplated in the Study must be organized and laid out as part of a seamless, region-wide system, such that funds are allocated and administered on behalf of a single regional network, as opposed to being controlled and managed separately by "Caltrain", "ACE", "BART" and other individual properties. Transit patrons don't really care very much about who owns the trains, buses or boats they use, but they do care about how well the system functions as a system.
- 19) For similar reasons it is essential that high speed rail services are developed within the regional framework, meaning that in certain sections there should be both 125 + mph commuter rail service and high speed rail service operating within the same high speed right-of-way.
- 20) To assure an accurate basis of comparison, it will be necessary to develop realistic estimates of future automobile operating costs, bridge tolls, hot lane costs, parking costs and availability and fare levels. All of these variables are currently unknown but reasonable assumptions will have to be made if there is to be any hope of producing realistic "out-year" results.